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# *Information Bulletin*

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*Grade 3 English Language Arts*  
*1995-96*

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This bulletin contains general information about the Provincial Student Assessment Program and information specific to the Grade 3 English Language Arts Achievement Test. **It replaces all previous bulletins.**

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**October 1995**

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## ***General Information***

The Provincial Student Assessment Program provides teachers, parents, students, school administrators, Alberta Education, and the public with information about what students know and can do in relation to provincial standards. Group results are reported at school, district, and provincial levels to improve learning opportunities for students.

The assessments are administered in two subject areas at Grade 3—language arts and mathematics—and in four subject areas at grades 6 and 9—language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.

The assessments are based on provincial standards, which reflect important learnings in the subject areas listed above. Classroom teachers from across the province are extensively involved in developing and field testing the assessment instruments.

### ***Administering the Assessment***

Information about the nature of the provincial assessments as well as their administration to special needs students can be found in the *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*, which is mailed to all superintendents and principals in the fall each year.

### ***Schedule***

The written-response component of English and French Language Arts will be administered during the last week of May. The machine-scorable component of all achievement tests will be administered during the last two weeks of June. Specific information regarding scheduling is provided in the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

To minimize any risks to security, we recommend that all students complete the test on the same day. Superintendents approve a local schedule for achievement test administration within the dates provided. Students who are absent when the tests are administered and who return to school by the end of the school year must write the tests upon their return. By scheduling the tests early in the administration period most, if not all, absentees can be tested upon their return to school. The principal is responsible for ensuring the security of the tests.

The tests that will be administered each year are:

#### **Grade 3**

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

#### **Grade 6**

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Français 6<sup>e</sup> Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

Science (English and French forms)

Social Studies (English and French forms)

#### **Grade 9**

English Language Arts (*Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading*)

Français 9<sup>e</sup> Année (*Partie A: Production écrite and Partie B: Lecture*)

Mathematics (English and French forms)

Science (English and French forms)

Social Studies (English and French forms)

### ***Students in French Immersion Programs***

All students in French Immersion programs must write the French form of the achievement tests. Alberta Education will send a checklist to schools by January requesting an indication of how many English or French tests are required. These forms must be returned through jurisdiction offices by mid-February.



## ***Reporting the Results***

Each school jurisdiction will receive a district report and individual school reports regarding their students' achievement, as well as guidelines for interpreting these results in relation to provincial standards.

To facilitate reflection on school programs, we expect that results will be shared with all school staff (not just teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9), as well as with parents and the community.

An individual profile for each student will be sent to the school that the student will attend in September. We also expect that these reports will be shared with parents.

Provincial results for each subject and grade will be made public in September, in documents titled *Assessment Highlights*.

## ***Broadened Assessment Initiatives***

The Student Evaluation Branch has developed additional instruments to collect a broader base of information about what students know and can do than achievement tests themselves can provide. These instruments will be administered to a provincial sample of students in all subjects on a rotating basis. The following assessments will be given in 1996:

### **Grade 3**

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

### **Grade 6**

- "whole book" performance-based assessment in language arts

### **Grade 9**

- problem-solving activities in mathematics

## ***Description of the Language Arts Assessment Standards***

The provincial standards are the basis upon which we assess how well students are doing in reading and writing by the end of Grade 3. These standards reflect the essential learnings that all Alberta students are expected to achieve. Provincial standards are useful, therefore, for assessing Grade 3 students in all types of school programs—public, private, and home education.

## ***Purpose of Assessment Standards***

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 3 students who are meeting the *acceptable standard* or the *standard of excellence* on independent work at the end of the Grade 3 Language Arts program. These statements represent the standards against which student achievement will be measured. By comparing actual results with expected provincial standards, decisions can be made about whether achievement is, in fact, "good enough."

## ***Acceptable Standard***

### **Writing**

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* for writing in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to be able to retell a series of connected personal experiences as a narrative and to tell stories from their own perspective. They should be able to use narrative formats on their own. They are able to use a writing style that generally holds the reader's interest.

Students meeting the *acceptable standard* are expected to use relevant but general details and/or ideas in their writing. They are expected to focus the writing on the important ideas related to a topic and to arrange those ideas in a discernible order. They are expected to provide a beginning and an ending that are connected to the ideas presented in the piece. They are also expected to be able to compose stories following a basic story structure.

The expectation is that students meeting the *acceptable standard* experiment with words and sentence structures to express their ideas and experiences. They are expected to use words and expressions that are clear, although general rather than specific.

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* for writing in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to use complete sentences, with correct capitalization and end punctuation, most of the time. They are expected to be able to spell many familiar words correctly and unfamiliar words phonetically.

### **Reading**

Students who meet the *acceptable standard* for reading in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to read and understand a variety of types of fiction and non-fiction materials that are commonly found in Grade 3 classrooms. They are expected to be able to use the features of narrative/poetic and informational text to aid understanding. They should be able to use their own prior experiences and knowledge of language, as well as context clues, in order to make meaning from text. They are expected to be able to recognize explicit relationships between events and characters in a story. To meet the *acceptable standard*, students are expected to explore print and non-print sources to extend knowledge, retell key details or important ideas, and draw conclusions.

## ***Standard of Excellence***

### **Writing**

Students who meet the *standard of excellence* for writing in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to comfortably retell a series of connected experiences as a narrative and to tell stories from their own perspective or from another young child's perspective. The expectation is that they are able to experiment with a variety of narrative formats. They are expected to express a unique experience and their own personality through their choice of topic, characters, actions, and specific language, using a style that captivates and holds the reader's interest.

To meet the *standard of excellence*, students are expected to use specific details and/or ideas that are appropriate for achieving the purpose of the writing. They are expected to focus the writing on the important ideas related to a topic, and arrange them in a logical sequence without gaps in the presentation of information. They are expected to begin their writing in an interesting manner and to draw it to a conclusion that is related to the focus of the piece. They should be able to compose stories that incorporate setting, problem, and external responses of the main characters and resolution. They are also able to experiment with dialogue in their writing.

The expectation is that students meeting the *standard of excellence* experiment with words and sentence structures to express ideas and experiences. They are expected to show control and variation in the use of sentence structure and to choose specific words to create desired effects.

Students who meet the *standard of excellence* for writing in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to correctly use capital letters, periods, and question and exclamation marks. They are expected to be able to produce correct spellings for frequently used words and apply their



knowledge of common spelling patterns correctly when spelling unfamiliar words.

## Reading

Students who meet the *standard of excellence* for reading in Grade 3 Language Arts are expected to read and clearly understand an increasing variety of genres, including those that are not the usual story form. They are expected to be able to use their understanding of the organizational structure and presentation of narrative/poetic and informational text to assist them as readers. They should be able to draw on prior experiences, knowledge of language, and context clues in order to make meaning from text. They are expected to be able to understand explicit as well as implicit relationships between events and characters in a story. To meet the *standard of excellence*, students are expected to explore print and non-print sources to extend knowledge, and to synthesize information and draw conclusions or make judgements.

### Important Information to Note!

*Students may do their writing using a word processor. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written component of the achievement test, see the General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program.*

## Grade 3 Language Arts Assessment

The Grade 3 Language Arts Assessment consists of two components:

- *Part A: Writing* consists of one writing assignment to be given during a period totalling approximately 70 minutes, preferably the 20-minute period directly preceding recess (10 minutes for discussion, 10 minutes for planning) and

the 50-minute period directly following recess (drafting and revising).

- *Part B: Reading*, to be administered during a 60-minute period, consists of 40 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual media. The booklet for *Part B: Reading* contains both the reading selections and the questions. Answers are to be recorded in the test booklet.

Additional time of up to 30 minutes may be provided for students to complete each part.

Students may **NOT** use a dictionary when completing either Part A or Part B.

### Part A: Writing

For *Part A: Writing*, students will be given an illustrated writing prompt and will be allowed to choose the format that best fits their approach to the prompt (narrative, letter, diary/journal entries). The person who administers the test will read the instructions and the story prompt aloud to the students.

Students will be given time to discuss the prompt with classmates in groups of two to four children, or to think alone about it, and to plan their response before beginning to write.

The booklet for *Part A: Writing* includes a page for ideas/planning, followed by lined pages for writing.

The writing blueprint is given on the next page and a sample assignment for classroom use is presented on pages 7 and 8. It illustrates the kind of writing prompt that will appear on the assessment.

Scoring guides follow on pages 9 to 13. Teachers should discuss the sample assignment with their students.

## Blueprint

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
<p><b>*Content</b> (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)</p> <p>Events and/or actions should be plausible within the context established by the writer. The student should be able to select appropriate details to describe events and characters, and their actions.</p>	<p>The writing assignment follows a picture and a writing prompt that will be read aloud to students. The assignment allows the student to select the format that would best fit his/her approach to the prompt.</p>	<p>The student's achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:</p> <p>Meets the standard of excellence</p> <p>Approaches the standard of excellence</p> <p>Clearly meets the acceptable standard</p> <p>Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard</p> <p>Clearly below the acceptable standard</p> <p>INS insufficient</p>
<p><b>*Organization</b> (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)</p> <p>The student should be able to organize ideas, events, and details in a coherent sequence.</p>		
<p><b>Sentence Structure</b> (structuring sentences effectively)</p> <p>The student should be able to use a variety of sentence types and structures appropriately.</p>		
<p><b>Vocabulary</b> (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)</p> <p>The student should be able to use words and expressions appropriately and effectively.</p>		
<p><b>Conventions</b> (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>The student should be able to communicate clearly by adhering to appropriate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.</p>		

\*These categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the others.



## ***Marking***

Classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing, using the scoring guides presented on pages 9 to 13, before returning materials to Alberta Education. Samples of students' writing that exemplify the scoring criteria will also be provided to support local marking.

Marks awarded locally can be submitted to Alberta Education and used as the first reading of a student's response. The papers will then be marked centrally by Alberta Education as the second reading. Discrepancies will be adjudicated by a third reading, which will determine the final mark that a paper is awarded. In this way, valid and reliable individual and group results can be reported.

All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July. The Student Evaluation Branch will contact superintendents in the spring for their recommendations of markers. The approximately 160 Grade 3 teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta. To qualify for recommendation by a superintendent, a prospective marker must be currently teaching Grade 3 Language Arts, have taught it for at least two years, have a permanent Alberta teaching certificate, and

be employed by a school jurisdiction at the time of marking. Markers will be contacted in May. The list of markers will be finalized no later than June 15. Group leaders will meet before the marking session.

## ***Confirming Standards***

Confirming standards is a process in which some teachers who are selected for marking are asked to make judgements about the achievement test to answer the question of whether province-wide performance is good enough. For more information on the confirming standards process, refer to the *Provincial Student Assessment Program Provincial Report, June 1993 Administration*. For information on the selection of teachers for participation in the confirming standards process, refer to the current *General Information Bulletin, Provincial Student Assessment Program*.

## ***Sample Writing Assignment***

The sample assignment and instructions that follow are similar in format and content to those that will be presented on the Grade 3 Language Arts Achievement Test.

**Grade 3 Achievement Test**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Part A: Writing**

***Description***

In this test, you will have 10 minutes for discussion, 10 minutes for planning, and 50 minutes to complete your writing.

***Instructions***

- Read the story starter as your teacher reads it aloud.
- You will have 10 minutes to talk with your classmates about the writing activity or to think about it by yourself.
- You will then have 10 minutes to do your planning. Plan your writing in whatever way you choose (web, list, pictures, etc.).
- Choose the kind of writing (story, letter, diary/journal entries) that will allow you to show your best writing.
- When you are doing your writing, print or write as neatly as you can.
- When you have finished, **check your work carefully** and correct any mistakes.



*Pretend that you find an interesting looking hat. It is a very unusual hat because something special happens to anyone who wears it.*

*Write about the adventures you or someone else might have while wearing the special hat.*



## Scoring Guide

### CONTENT

#### *Focus*

When marking **CONTENT** appropriate for Grade 3 writing, the marker should consider the

- relationship between events, actions, and the context (situation) established by the writer
- specificity of detail
- reader/writer relationship

<b>Meets the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events, actions, and/or ideas are consistently appropriate for the context established by the writer.</li> <li>• Details are specific and consistently effective.</li> <li>• The writing captivates and holds the reader's interest.</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events, actions, and/or ideas are consistently appropriate for the context established by the writer.</li> <li>• Details are specific and consistently effective.</li> <li>• The writing engages and generally holds the reader's interest.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of the events, actions, and/or ideas are appropriate for the context established by the writer.</li> <li>• Details are general and may be predictable, but are appropriate.</li> <li>• The writing generally holds the reader's attention.</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the events, actions, and/or ideas are appropriate for the context established by the writer.</li> <li>• Details are few and/or may be repetitive.</li> <li>• The writing does not hold the reader's attention.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are few events, actions, and/or ideas.</li> <li>• Details are scant.</li> <li>• The writing is confusing and/or frustrating for the reader.</li> </ul>
<b>INS    INSUFFICIENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student has written so little that it is not possible to assess the content.</li> </ul>

**Note:** Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as each of the other categories.



## ORGANIZATION

### *Focus*

When marking **ORGANIZATION** appropriate for Grade 3 writing, the marker should consider the

- beginning
- connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters
- ending

<b>Meets the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beginning captures the reader's attention, clearly establishes events, characters, and/or setting, and provides direction for the writing.</li> <li>• Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are consistently maintained.</li> <li>• The ending ties events and/or actions together.</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beginning clearly establishes events, characters, and/or setting and provides direction for the writing.</li> <li>• Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are maintained.</li> <li>• The ending provides an appropriate finish for events and/or actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beginning directly presents information about events, characters, and or setting.</li> <li>• Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are generally maintained.</li> <li>• The ending is predictable and/or may be contrived but is connected to events and/or actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beginning may be confusing.</li> <li>• Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are unclear, missing, or inconsistent.</li> <li>• The ending is predictable and/or may be contrived.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beginning provides little information.</li> <li>• Connections and/or relationships between events, actions, details, and/or characters are missing.</li> <li>• The ending, if present, is unconnected to the events and/or actions.</li> </ul>
<b>INS INSUFFICIENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writing has been awarded an INS for <b>Content</b>.</li> </ul>

*Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.*

## SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### *Focus*

When marking **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** appropriate for Grade 3 writing, the marker should consider the

- writer's control of sentence structure
- presence of different sentence patterns and length

<b>Meets the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence structure is consistently controlled.</li> <li>• Sentence type and length are varied and effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence structure is controlled.</li> <li>• Sentence type and length are usually varied and effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence structure is generally controlled but may occasionally impede the meaning.</li> <li>• Sentences may vary in type and length.</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence structure sometimes lacks control, and this often impedes meaning.</li> <li>• There is little variation of sentence type and/or length.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thought units are difficult to recognize, and this severely impedes the meaning.</li> <li>• There is no variation of sentence type and/or length.</li> </ul>
<b>INS INSUFFICIENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writing has been awarded an INS for <b>Content</b>.</li> </ul>

## VOCABULARY

### *Focus*

When marking **VOCABULARY** appropriate for Grade 3 writing, the marker should consider the

- quality of words and expressions
- specificity of words and expressions

<b>Meets the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and expressions are used to create vivid images.</li> <li>• Words and expressions are consistently precise and effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and expressions are descriptive.</li> <li>• Words and expressions are generally specific and effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and expressions are clear.</li> <li>• Words and expressions are usually more general than specific.</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and expressions are basic.</li> <li>• Words and expressions may be repetitive.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words and expressions are simple and/or ineffective.</li> <li>• Words indicate a lack of vocabulary for writing.</li> </ul>
<b>INS INSUFFICIENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writing has been awarded an INS for <b>Content</b>.</li> </ul>

## CONVENTIONS

### *Focus*

When marking **CONVENTIONS** appropriate for Grade 3 writing, the marker should consider

- end punctuation and capitalization
- spelling
- clarity

**Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.**

<b>Meets the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End punctuation and capitalization are correct.</li> <li>• Most words, familiar and unfamiliar, are spelled correctly; spelling errors are understandable “slips.”</li> <li>• Errors that are present do not affect the clarity or effectiveness of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Approaches the Standard of Excellence</b>  <b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End punctuation and capitalization are essentially correct.</li> <li>• Familiar words are spelled correctly; spelling errors are “slips”; unfamiliar words may be spelled phonetically.</li> <li>• Errors that are present do not affect the clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional end punctuation and capitalization are usually correct.</li> <li>• Many familiar words are spelled correctly; errors suggest uneven control of spelling rules; unfamiliar words are generally spelled phonetically.</li> <li>• Errors are sometimes intrusive and may affect the clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End punctuation and capitalization, when present, are inconsistent.</li> <li>• Many familiar words are misspelled and/or spelled phonetically.</li> <li>• Errors interfere with the clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard</b>  <b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little, if any, evidence that the writer understands correct use of end punctuation and capitalization.</li> <li>• Words may be difficult to discern and are generally spelled phonetically.</li> <li>• Communication is not clear.</li> </ul>
<b>INS INSUFFICIENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writing has been awarded an INS for <b>Content</b>.</li> </ul>



## ***Part B: Reading***

*Part B: Reading* of the Grade 3 Language Arts Achievement Test consists of 40 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual media.

The reading blueprint for the June assessment is on page 15.

The sample questions on pages 16 to 21 appeared on the 1995 Achievement Test and may be used with students. Other questions from the 1995 achievement test remain secured. The sample questions, along with questions from previous bulletins, can be used to prepare students for the current Achievement Test. These questions illustrate the nature and complexity of those that will appear on the 1996 test, although the emphasis may be slightly different. The key and descriptors for the sample questions are on page 22.

### ***Development***

Reading selections were chosen according to the following general guidelines:

- Reading selections, whenever possible, should be relatively short but should be complete works containing a beginning, a middle, and an end
- Reading selections should reflect the interests of the majority of Grade 3 students
- Reading selections should be of appropriate difficulty for Grade 3 students

- Canadian content should be used extensively

The following considerations guided question development:

- Questions related to each reading selection should be arranged from specific to general, wherever practical
- Questions should test the student's ability to understand and analyze the reading selections and to make judgements about their form and content. Only questions dealing with significant aspects of the reading selections should be asked
- The assessment blueprint must support important learnings for Grade 3 students

## Blueprint

The blueprint for *Part B: Reading* shows the reporting categories and language function under which questions are classified, and indicates the number of questions in each category.

Reporting Category	Question Distribution by Language Function		Number of Questions	Percent of Test*
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic		
<b>1. Understanding Main Ideas/Details</b> The student should be able to identify key details and main ideas, differentiate between main and supporting characters, recognize character motivation and explicit relationships between events and characters, and categorize ideas.	6	11	17	43
<b>2. Organization of Ideas and Relationships between Form and Content</b> The student should be able to identify genre (stories, poetry, plays, reports, and articles), organize features of story structure, use text and typographical features, recognize author's techniques, and determine an author's purpose.	3	5	8	20
<b>3. Associating Meaning</b> The student should be able to associate meanings of words, expressions, and literary devices from prior knowledge and contextual clues.	1	5	6	15
<b>4. Synthesizing Ideas</b> The student should be able to draw conclusions by relating what is known to new information, and assess the plausibility of ideas and situations in literature.	6	3	9	22
<b>Number of Questions</b>	16	24	40	100
<b>Percent of Test</b>	40	60	100	100

\*Percentages may vary somewhat according to the reading selections chosen.

**I. Read the following story and answer questions 1 to 5.**

**STUART LITTLE**

Because he was so small, Stuart was often hard to find around the house. His father and his mother and his brother George seldom could locate him by looking for him—usually they had to call him; and the house often echoed with cries of “Stuart! Stooo-art!” You would come into a room, and he might be curled up in a chair, but you wouldn’t see him. Mr. Little was in constant fear of losing him and never finding him again. He even made him a tiny red cap, such as hunters wear, so that he would be easier to see.

One day when he was seven years old, Stuart was in the kitchen watching his mother make tapioca pudding. He was feeling hungry, and when Mrs. Little opened the door of the refrigerator to get something, Stuart slipped inside to see if he could find a piece of cheese. He supposed, of course, his mother had seen him, and when the door swung shut and he realized he was locked in, it surprised him greatly.

*E.B. White*



**1. What is the meaning of the underlined word seldom?**

- ☐ Many times
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Never
- ☐ Hardly ever

**2. Mr. Little was afraid of losing Stuart because Stuart was**

- ☐ only seven
- ☐ so small
- ☐ locked in the refrigerator
- ☐ looking for cheese

**3. Mr. Little made a small red cap for Stuart because it would**

- ☐ be his favourite colour
- ☐ make him feel like a hunter
- ☐ be easier to see him
- ☐ keep his head warm

**4. The refrigerator door was open because Mrs. Little**

- ☐ needed something in the refrigerator
- ☐ was looking for Stuart
- ☐ was feeling hungry
- ☐ forgot to close it

**5. Stuart was surprised that he was locked in the refrigerator because he**

- ☐ thought his mother had seen him
- ☐ was worried about freezing
- ☐ knew his family would look for him
- ☐ found lots of good cheese

**II. Read the following recipe and answer questions 6 to 8.**

**YOGURT POPSICLES**

**Makes 30**

**You will need:**

large mixing bowl  
metric measures  
wooden spoon  
small paper cups  
popsicle sticks  
freezer

**Ingredients:**

850 mL plain yogurt  
355 mL frozen orange juice  
concentrate, thawed  
75 mL liquid honey  
15 mL vanilla

- Step 1.** Mix the yogurt, orange juice, honey, and vanilla in the large mixing bowl.
- Step 2.** Spoon the mixture into the paper cups. Fill the paper cups half full.
- Step 3.** Put the half-full cups into the freezer.
- Step 4.** When the mixture is almost frozen, insert a popsicle stick into each cup.
- Step 5.** When the mixture is frozen, peel off the paper and eat the popsicles.



**6. In yogurt popsicles, the MAIN ingredients are**

- ☐ orange juice and a large mixing bowl
- ☐ yogurt and a freezer
- ☐ yogurt and orange juice
- ☐ popsicle sticks and paper cups

**7. The sticks are placed in the mixture when it is almost frozen so that the**

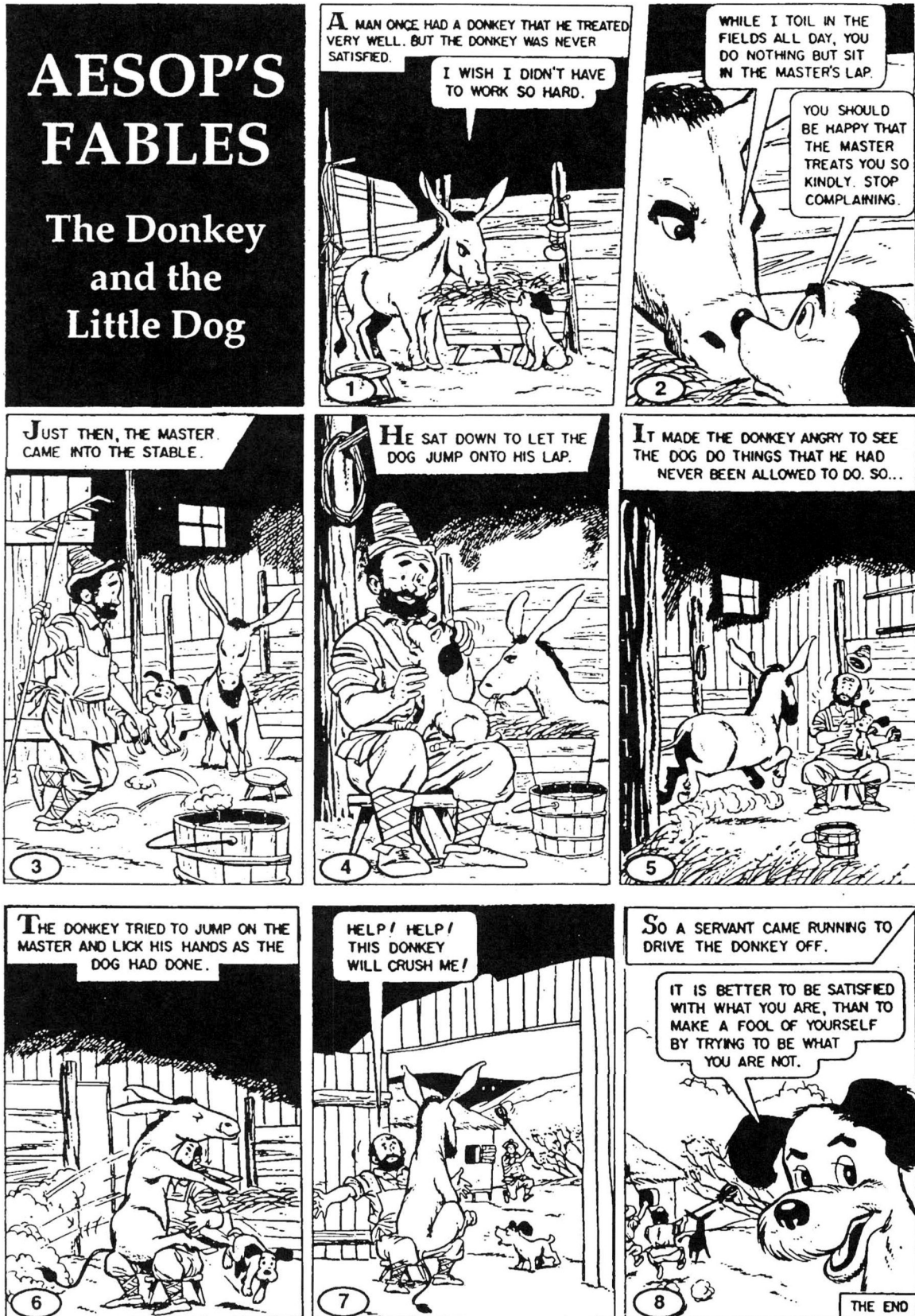
- ☐ sticks will not break
- ☐ sticks will stay in place
- ☐ mixture will freeze better
- ☐ mixture will not separate

**8. How many people will this recipe serve?**

- ☐ Thirty
- ☐ Twenty
- ☐ Thirteen
- ☐ Ten



III. Read the following cartoon and answer questions 9 to 13.



- 9. The donkey complained to the dog because the donkey**
- ☐ thought the master liked the dog better
  - ☐ thought the master was mean to him
  - ☐ felt the dog was smarter than he was
  - ☐ knew the dog listened to him
- 10. The picture that BEST shows that the donkey is satisfied is**
- ☐ 2
  - ☐ 3
  - ☐ 4
  - ☐ 6
- 11. When the donkey jumped onto his lap, the master PROBABLY felt**
- ☐ sad
  - ☐ happy
  - ☐ afraid
  - ☐ loving
- 12. The author of this story is**
- ☐ the donkey
  - ☐ the dog
  - ☐ fables
  - ☐ Aesop
- 13. What lesson does this story teach us?**
- ☐ Be satisfied with the way you are.
  - ☐ Be sure to look before you leap.
  - ☐ The biggest dog was once a puppy.
  - ☐ Donkeys and dogs can be friends.

### ***Key and Descriptors for Sample Questions***

<b>Question</b>	<b>Key</b>	<b>Language Function</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Curriculum Standard</b>	<b>Examples of Assessment Standard*</b>
1	D	Narrative/ poetic	Associating meaning	Recognize word meaning from context clues	E
2	B	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/detail	Determine explicit relationships between characters	A
3	C	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/details	Identify key details to judge character motivation	A
4	A	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/details	Determine explicit relationships between characters and events	A
5	A	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/details	Identify key details	A
6	C	Informative	Main ideas/details	Identify key details to make a judgement	E
7	B	Informative	Synthesizing ideas	Use prior knowledge to draw conclusions	A
8	A	Informative	Organization of ideas	Use text features	E
9	A	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/details	Identify main ideas to infer character motivation	A
10	D	Narrative/ poetic	Organization of ideas	Use visual clues (pictures) to make sense of reading	A
11	C	Narrative/ poetic	Main ideas/details	Infer character's feelings	A
12	D	Narrative/ poetic	Organization of ideas	Use text features to assist them as reader	A
13	A	Narrative/ poetic	Synthesizing ideas	Draw conclusions about situations in literature	A

\*A—Students meeting the acceptable standard should be able to answer correctly questions such as these.

E—In addition to answering the questions identified for the acceptable standard, students meeting the standard of excellence should be able to correctly answer questions such as these.

## ***Suggestions for Helping Students***

*I strongly advocate preparing children to understand tests and testing through extensive class discussion about the makeup of the test and how to take it, and then adequate practice to find out their own particular weaknesses in approaching tests.*

—Graves, p. 183

The best way to prepare students for writing the Language Arts test is to use instructional time teaching the important learnings in Grade 3 Language Arts.

Teachers may also wish, however, to familiarize their students with the format of both the machine-scorable and the written-response components of the assessment by having them work through the sample questions and writing assignment included in this bulletin.

The Student Evaluation Branch has published documents entitled *Samples of Students' Writing*, which came from the responses given on previous Grade 3 Language Arts achievement tests. Teachers may wish to share these samples with students and to familiarize students with the scoring criteria that appear in this bulletin.

We hope that teachers will share the following information with students to help them prepare for the Language Arts Assessment.

### ***Part A: Writing***

Have students:

*Listen carefully to the instructions as they are read out loud and do what the assignment asks them to do.* It is important for them to read over the instructions and think about what they will write.

*Talk about their ideas.* Students will have a chance to share their ideas with some of their classmates. They should remember, though, that each student is to write his/her own story. Sharing ideas is just to help them get started.

*Plan their writing.* Students should make a plan that helps them organize their ideas. They may want to try a

- list (characters, setting, etc.)
- chart (beginning, middle, ending)
- web

*Think about some of the things that make good writing,* such as

- using important ideas that make sense together
- including details or describing events, characters, and their actions
- organizing ideas in an order that makes sense
- using words and sentences that help the reader understand what they want to say

*Check their work and make any changes on their first draft.*

### ***Part B: Reading***

Have students:

*Read the material, using the strategy that works best for them.* They may

- a. read the selection and think carefully about it before they try to answer the questions; or
- b. read the questions first and then read the selection, remembering the questions they need to answer.

*Read a selection more than once.* It is all right for students to read a selection as many times as they need to in order to answer the questions. Remind them to go back to the reading selection before answering each question.



*Make sure they look at all types of information given. Information may be given in words, pictures, cartoons, or charts.*

*Make sure they read carefully all four choices before choosing the answer they think is best. All of the answers might seem*

partly correct, but only one is the **best** answer. If they don't see a correct or best answer right away, encourage them to try to find two choices that make the most sense and choose one of them.

## ***Credit***

Donald H. Graves, *Build a Literate Classroom* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1991), p. 183.

## ***Alberta Education Contact***

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